

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY
DATE: MARCH 23, 2021
TIME: 7:01 P.M.
PLACE: HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW G. L. C. 30A, SECTION 20 AND THE CITY COUNCIL'S VOTE TO WAIVE RULE 21A

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY, CHAIRMAN (REMOTELY); NAOMI CARNEY, VICE CHAIRPERSON (7:06) (REMOTELY); IAN ABREU (REMOTELY); DEREK BAPTISTE (REMOTELY); HUGH DUNN (REMOTELY); MARIA GIESTA (REMOTELY); SCOTT LIMA (REMOTELY); LINDA MORAD (7:10) (REMOTELY)

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO; BRIAN GOMES

* * *

Councillor Markey called the City Property Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Carney & Gomes stating they would be late in attending this meeting and a Communication from Councillor Coelho explaining her absence from this meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Lopes. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 0, with Councillors Carney and Morad not present for the vote and Councillors Abreu, yes, Baptiste, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes; Lopes, yes; Markey, yes.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting for review and approval AN ORDER accepting a thirty (30) year Term Preservation Restriction granted by the Waterfront Historic Area League of New Bedford, Inc., to the New Bedford Historical Commission for property containing about 2,952 square feet, more or less, improved by a building and owned by the Waterfront Historic Area League of New Bedford, Inc., the subject property is located at 305-307 Pleasant Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts, being more particularly described in a quitclaim deed dated December 1, 1999, and recorded in Book 4573, Page 60 in the Bristol County (Southern District) Registry of Deeds (Ref'd 02/11/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Giesta. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 8, Nays 0, with Councillor Morad not present for the vote and Councillors Abreu, yes; Baptiste, yes; Carney, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes; Lopes, yes; Markey, yes. (1, 1a)

On motion by Councillor Baptiste and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 6, Nays 2, with Councillors Lopes and Markey opposed, Morad not present for the vote and Councillors Abreu, yes; Baptiste, yes; Carney, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Giesta, Abreu, Council President Lopes, Councillors Lima, Carney and Coelho, requesting that City Solicitor Mikaela McDermott, DPI Commissioner Jamie Ponte, Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches Mary Rapoza, and the Director of Purchasing Molly Gilfeather, be invited to a Committee on City Property meeting to discuss the possibility of the City selling the two pocket parks in the North End, the Nye Street Pocket Park and the Phillips Avenue Pocket Park, these parks were first created as an idea that the neighborhood would take advantage of the green space that these parks provided; unfortunately, these pocket parks have had the opposite effect, they are being used by drug dealers and users and for prostitution, the residents and business owners in the surrounding areas deserve better and should not have to live with the ongoing crime that is being perpetrated in these pocket parks; further requesting that the City please sell these pocket parks to interested buyers who will utilize their use for the betterment of the neighborhood, i.e., possible business or residential parking (To be Referred to the Committee on City Property.) (Ref'd 02/25/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Lopes. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0, with Councillors Abreu, yes; Baptiste, yes; Carney, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes; Lopes, yes; Markey, yes; Morad, yes. (2)

Councillor Giesta expressed her concern of the cleanliness and safety of the City's pocket parks. One and a half years ago, signs were posted allowing access to pocket parks from sunrise to sunset to combat unwanted elements; but this is not working. She suggested doing away with such parks, perhaps selling the properties to nearby businesses for parking or to neighbors to extend their land.

Molly Gilfeather, Purchasing Agent, was asked if the property could sell, would Purchasing be able to issue the necessary RFP's and she said they could.

Jaime Ponte, DPI Commissioner, explained they do clean the pocket parks approximately twice a week and the garbage barrels are picked up daily. During the summer months more attention is paid to the pocket parks.

Christina Connelly from the Mayor's Office was asked if the Administration would have the appetite to privately dispose of the property or should cameras and lighting be explored with the Police Department. Ms. Connelly suggested that the Administration might not be in favor of selling the pocket parks property; that it is not the best solution for right now.

Anne Louro, Acting City Planner, was asked if the property could be sold for parking lots or built on and she stated that if the lot sizes do not conform to the allowed frontage that you could not build a structure on the property. Parking lots would require more work than people are thinking and that you cannot simply pave over the area. You would need to include the appropriate curb cuts and drainage systems. You would not have the number of spots you would think you would have. Commissioner Ponte supported these comments.

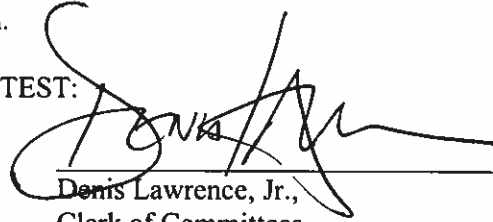
Councillor Giesta said that she is all for second chances for these parks, but if the City cannot come up with solutions to allow for their existence, then the City should look to sell the property.

On motion by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0, with Councillor Abreu, yes; Baptiste, yes; Carney, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes; Lopes, yes; Markey, yes; Morad, yes.

Councillor Abreu made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Giesta. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0, with Councillors Abreu, yes; Baptiste, yes; Carney, yes; Dunn, yes; Giesta, yes; Lima, yes; Lopes, yes; Markey, yes; Morad, yes.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:50 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees